



# NEWS RELEASE

## NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

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## **SURVEYS MEASURE AGRICULTURAL CHEMICAL USE AND CONSERVATION ISSUES**

**(NASHVILLE, September 8, 2006)** – How are local farmers being affected by escalating fuel and fertilizer costs? How are farmers' conservation practices improving water, soil, and air quality across the country? What new production practices are Tennessee's tomato and snap bean producers using? To help answer these and other questions, USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, Tennessee Field Office, will conduct the Agricultural Resource Management Survey, the Conservation Effects Assessment Project, and the Vegetable Chemical Use Survey during the fall of 2006. These surveys will provide information on chemical applications, production practices, pest management, and conservation practices.

"USDA has an obligation to provide reliable data on pesticide use and other production practices and these surveys give us the information necessary to do that," said Debra Kenerson, State Director. Kenerson added, "Accurate and complete responses from producers are essential to the success of the surveys. We safeguard the confidentiality of all survey responses and data about individual operations are used only in conjunction with information from other producers."

The agricultural producers selected to participate in these surveys will make an important contribution to the overall welfare of the U.S. agricultural community. All information gathered will be merged and used by commodity analysts, producer organizations, and others to benefit Tennessee farmers. Survey participants have an opportunity to set the record straight about issues that affect them, such as use of fertilizers and pesticides. One of the most important findings to emerge from previous surveys is that growers generally apply pesticides at rates considerably below manufacturers' maximum recommended levels.

Tennessee farm operators selected to participate in this year's surveys are being notified by letter, and interviewers will visit them personally to collect their reports at their convenience. USDA will use the results of the Agricultural Resource Management Survey and Vegetable Chemical Use Survey to publish information on agricultural chemical usage and analyze commodity production costs and returns in a series of reports during 2007. The National Resources Conservation Service publishes annual progress reports based on the results of the Conservation Effects Assessment Project survey. The Agricultural Resource Management Survey, the Conservation Effects Assessment Project, and Vegetable Chemical Use Survey are just a few ways that USDA and producers work together to provide meaningful, accurate, and objective statistical information that help keep U.S. agricultural and rural communities among the most robust in the world.

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